THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Seven Export Processing Zones are presently functioning in the country.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Exports from the EPZs during 1994-95 was Rs. 2628 Crores (Prov). EPZs accounted for about 3 per cent of the total manufactured exports from the country in 1993-94.

Impact of import of Edible Oils on farming sector

3099. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 83 given in the Rajya Sabha on 20th March, 1995 and state:

(a) what would be the impact of the Policy of free import of edible oils on Indian farmers producing oilseeds;

(b) whether any assessment has been made of negative impact on Indian farming sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Keeping in view the levels of prevailing international and domestic prices of edible oils and the domestic demand, it is unlikely that there will be any adverse impact on the farmers producing oilseeds on account of import of edible oils.

Information with tobacco board regarding opposition to anti tobacco Legislation

3100. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tobacco Board has received information on the joint representation of various Central Trade Unions opposing the proposed anti-tobacco legislation;

(b) what steps Tobacco Board has taken to study the negative effects of such legislation on tobacco farmers; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Tobacco Board discussed the proposed legislation with representatives of tobacco exporters, cigarette industry, Tobacco Institute of India and some members of Parliament and recommended that an Export Committee be constituted by the Government to examine its implications. It was also suggested that the legislation may be kept in abeyance till the Committee finalises its recommendations.

Market for Tobacco in Middle East and Africa

3101. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tobacco Board has explored possibility of new markets in the Middle East and Africa;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is good potential for Indian Tobacco in new countries; and

(c) what steps did Tobacco Board initiate to assist increase of exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Both the Middle East and Afaica are potential markets for increasing exports of Indian tobacco and tobacco products.

(c) Steps taken by the Tobacco Board to promote exports *inter-alia* include, extending long term credit to some countries in these regions. sponsoring trade delegations and